



Summary of Recommendations

1. **Adopt transportation benchmarks as a cornerstone of government accountability at the state, city, county, and transit district levels.** Measure results and monitor performance of government in meeting transportation benchmarks. Tie transportation funding to progress in achieving benchmarks. (*See Summary of Recommended Benchmarks for more detail*)
2. **Establish a single point of accountability at the state level, strengthening the role of the state in ensuring accountability of the statewide transportation system.** Grant the Governor oversight of the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), including the appointment of its secretary. Grant the Washington Transportation Commission new authority as the Transportation Accountability Commission (TAC), a single, independent point of accountability for monitoring and reporting the performance of the statewide transportation system at all levels.
3. **Direct a thorough and independent performance review of WSDOT administration practices and staffing levels.** Look for additional efficiencies in the administrative functions within the department.
4. **Remove the barriers to achieving the transportation benchmarks for efficiency and system performance by providing funding for a strong state and strong regional transportation system.** Provide local governments and transportation agencies funding and authority to implement efficiencies and raise regional revenues to meet the new benchmarks. Authorize and encourage jurisdictions to share resources.
5. **Invest in maintenance, preservation and improvement of the entire transportation system so the transportation benchmarks can be achieved.** Preserve the transportation system by making maintenance, preservation and safety the top funding priorities, including operation and maintenance costs of rail, transit and ferries. Optimize the system by using new technologies and management tools, such as congestion pricing and land use planning, to reduce demand on the highway system. Conduct benefit-cost analysis to choose the most effective mix of investments in the most heavily traveled corridors. Invest in the human resources necessary to maintain, preserve and improve the system.
6. **Provide regions with the ability to plan, select, fund and implement (or contract for implementation of) projects identified to meet the region's transportation and land use goals.** Allow regions to create new entities or select existing entities to plan, manage, fund and be accountable for regional transportation projects with the intention to simplify and minimize redundancy rather than add new layers of government.
7. **Achieve construction and project delivery efficiencies.** Reduce the engineering/construction cost ratio. Save money on construction materials and methods. Use right-of-way banking. Continue to assess prevailing wage survey techniques. Make mitigation more cost-effective. Have predictable revenue sources to fully fund projects.
8. **Incorporate the design-build process and its variations into construction projects to achieve the goals of time-savings and avoidance of costly change orders.** Grant agencies the authority to use design-build and provide opportunities for public employees to participate in the process. Provide increased education and training in alternative project delivery (ADP) concepts.
9. **Use the private sector to deliver projects and transportation services.** Continue pilot projects that allow the private sector to provide expertise and financing in developing cost-effective transportation facilities. Consider removing barriers that prevent the private sector from providing services, such as ferry, bus or monorail.

- 10. Reengineer the workplace to achieve greater efficiency, and consider the use of managed competition for operations and maintenance functions.** Focus the workplace on service, customer satisfaction and results. Incorporate elements of total quality management into business practices. Form partnerships with employer-employee organizations to develop apprenticeships and training programs.
- 11. Streamline permitting for transportation projects.** Delegate “Section 404” wetlands permit authority to the state. Develop new standards to streamline permit approvals and reduce process review delays. Select a significant highway project as a pilot study to plan and permit within two years. Evaluate the use of planning and permitting standards that encourage lower impact alternatives, such as Smart Growth, and accelerate the permit process for these projects. Work toward one-stop permitting, using a single application.
- 12. Link transportation funding to efficiencies.** Require WSDOT, counties, cities and transit to show progress toward achieving benchmark efficiencies as a condition of receiving new funding.
- 13. Link maintenance and preservation funds to best practices.** Require all agencies and jurisdictions to demonstrate the use of maintenance and pavement management systems and lowest life-cycle costs.
- 14. Simplify funding distributions for best results.** Distribute funds on a geographic basis to counties and cities taking into account lane miles, classification and pavement type, population, and utilization. Develop a new method for joint regional programming of federal funds. Create one-stop grant funding centers where all competitive funds are disbursed under regional priority programming agreements and administered using a single application process.
- 15. Allow regions to retain funds they raise.** Allocate sufficient funds to all regions for basic operations, maintenance, preservation and safety at a minimum agreed upon level. Guarantee each region a minimum return of 85% of state transportation taxes generated in that region, and allocate remaining funds to a statewide equalization fund. Allow regionally authorized taxes to remain in the region in which they are generated.
- 16. Seek a 90% fare box recovery for ferry system operational costs within 20 years.** Transfer 90% of the cost of operating the ferry system to those who use it.
- 17. Develop a package of new revenues to fund a comprehensive multi-modal set of investments, which, taken together with the recommended efficiency measures and reforms, will ensure a 20-year program of preserving, optimizing and expanding the state’s transportation system.** Adopt a series of revenue sources that can be used for roads, transit and transportation choices. Transfer transportation-related sales taxes to the transportation fund. Link other transportation-related revenues to transportation uses and users. Authorize a variety of statewide taxes and fees that could include: extending the existing gross weight fee to all vehicles; adding a surcharge to the existing gross weight fee for trucks dedicated to freight mobility improvements; increasing the motor fuel tax; adding a 6.5% sales tax to the wholesale price of motor fuel up to a set price cap of 80 cents per gallon; extending the \$30 license tab fee to all vehicles including trailers; adding a \$20 transportation mitigation fee on all passenger vehicles and non-commercial trucks; creating a new 2% surcharge on the wholesale sale of new and used vehicles, auto parts and accessories; and allowing congestion pricing. Examine the bonding of federal funds and expansion of tax increment financing for transportation projects. Examine all transportation revenue sources at least biennially and ensure they keep pace with inflation and growth.

Provide regional entities the authority to raise tax and fee revenues to fund regional transportation improvements. Authorize regional tax and fee options that might include: a vehicle miles traveled charge; a regional sales tax; allowing cities to impose the motor vehicle license fee if their county has not imposed the fee within two years; authorizing a new multi-modal transportation taxing authority for counties or regions that have not been previously granted high capacity transportation taxing authority; and allowing bonding programs at the state and regional levels.
- 18. Begin action now to improve the transportation system.** (*See Early Action Strategy*)